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# TATHASTU

Institute of Civil Services



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## Net-Direct Tax collections

**News:** Boosted by the first instalment of advances taxes, **net direct tax collections** grew **11.18 per cent** to **Rs 3,79,760 crore** till June 17 in the current financial year, according to data released by the Finance Ministry.

### Background:

- As per the **Budget 2023-24**, direct tax collections are estimated to be **Rs 18.23 lakh crore**, of which Rs 9.22 lakh crore is estimated to come from corporate tax and Rs 9.01 lakh crore from income tax.
- The government had collected **Rs 16.67 lakh crore** as direct taxes in **FY 2022-23**.

### What are Direct taxes?

- Direct taxes are taxes that are levied on the **income or profits of people or organizations**. They are paid directly by the taxpayers to the government and cannot be shifted to someone else. Direct taxes are governed by the **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** in India.
- Example – Income Tax, Corporation Tax, Capital Gains Tax, Securities transaction tax.

### What are the positive impacts of the rise in Direct tax collections?

- It can indicate a **recovery of economic activity** and **income levels** after the pandemic-induced slowdown.
- It can also reflect **improved tax compliance** and **efficiency** of tax administration.
- It can help the government **meet its fiscal deficit target** and **reduce its borrowing requirement**. It can also enable the government to increase its spending on public welfare and infrastructure projects.
- It **can benefit the taxpayers** by creating scope for rationalization of tax rates and slabs, as well as providing relief measures and incentives. It can also enhance the **trust and confidence of the taxpayers** in the tax system.

### Several reforms were taken by the Government of India to improve tax collections:

- **Reducing corporate tax rates** - The government has reduced the corporate tax rates from 30% to 22% for existing domestic companies and from 25% to 15% for new domestic manufacturing companies, subject to certain conditions. This is aimed at **boosting investment, growth** and **employment** in the country.
- **Vivad se Vishwas Scheme** - Under this scheme, taxpayers can settle their disputes **by paying only the disputed tax amount** and get a waiver of interest and penalty. This is expected to **reduce litigation, generate revenue and create trust** between the taxpayers and the tax authorities.
- **Simplification of Income tax return filing** - Pre-filled forms, faceless assessment, faceless appeal, e-PAN etc.
- **Several reforms** within the IT department and the **strengthening of the Indian economy** have also helped in higher direct tax collections.
- **Revising direct tax code** - The government has constituted various committees such as the **Arbind Modi Committee on Income Tax Reforms** and **Akhilesh Ranjan Panel on formulating a new Direct Tax Code (DTC)**, which aim to revise, consolidate and simplify the structure of direct tax laws in India into a single legislation.

## Groundwater Extraction Alters Earth's Tilt

**News:** A new study reveals that the Earth's tilt has changed by 31.5 inches (80 centimetres) between 1993 and 2010. It was found that humans have pumped so much groundwater from Earth that its tilt has been affected.

### Which processes affect Earth's rotational pole?

- Melting of Ice caps
- According to a study by a scientist at Seoul National University. "Our study shows that among climate-related causes, the **redistribution of groundwater** actually has the largest impact on the drift of the rotational pole."
- On a yearly basis, the Earth's rotational pole shifts by a few metres. The impact of groundwater retrieval on this shift depends on **where such reservoirs** are located. Scientists claim that **water removed from mid-latitudes** had the largest effect on the planet's tilt.

### What is the impact of change on the tilt of the Earth's axis?

- A change in the tilt can affect the **duration and intensity of the seasons**, making them longer or shorter, warmer or colder.
- The tilt of the Earth's axis also affects the **position of sunrise and sunset** on the horizon.
- The tilt of Earth's axis influences **the distribution of heat and moisture** across the globe, creating different climate zones such as tropical, temperate and polar. A change in the tilt can alter the boundaries and characteristics of these climate zones, affecting the vegetation, wildlife and human activities in those regions.
- The tilt of the Earth's axis affects the wind patterns that drive the ocean currents, which transport heat and nutrients around the world. It can influence the weather, marine life etc.



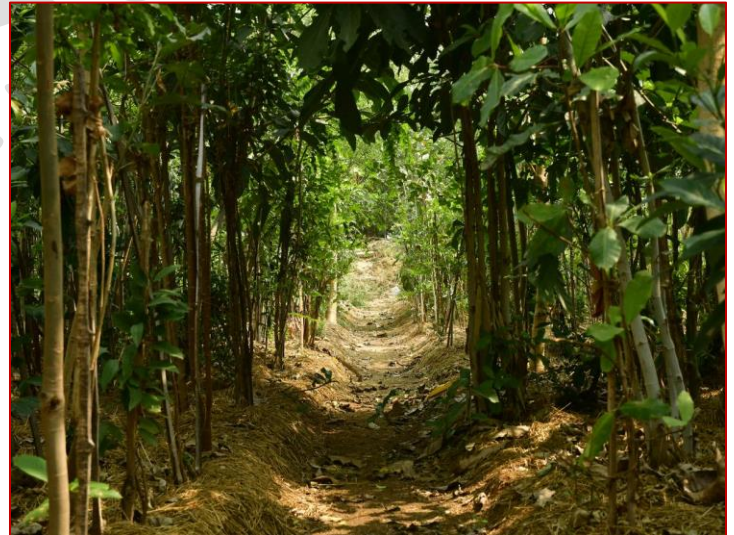
Source - Indiatimes

## Miyawaki Forests

**News:** In the latest edition of Mann ki Baat, PM Modi gave the example of a Kerala-based teacher, **Raafi Ramnath**, who used the Miyawaki technique to transform a barren land into a mini forest.

### What is the Miyawaki plantation method?

- Named after Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki, this method involves **planting two to four different types of indigenous trees within every square metre**. In this method, the trees become self-sustaining and they grow to their full length within three years.
- The methodology was developed in the 1970s, with the basic objective to densify green cover within a small parcel of land.
- The plants used in the Miyawaki method are mostly **self-sustaining** and **don't require regular maintenance** like manuring and watering.



### How is it useful?

- The dense green cover of indigenous trees plays a key role in **absorbing the dust particles** of the area where the garden has been set up. The plants also help in **regulating surface temperature**.
- Some of the common indigenous plants that are used for these forests include Anjan, Amala, Bel, Arjun and Gunj.
- They **regulate** carbon levels, and **encourage** new biodiversity and an ecosystem is developed around it, which in turn **increases the fertility of the soil** and regulates surface temperature.

Source - The Indian Express

## Kamala Sohonie

**News:** The Google Doodle on Sunday (June 18) honoured scientist Kamala Sohonie on her 112th birth anniversary. Note – Use such examples in your mains answers involving women empowerment.

### Who was Kamala Sohonie?

- She was the first Indian woman to get a **PhD degree in a scientific discipline** and went on to win the Rashtrapati Award for her work on **Neera**, a palm extract that could fight malnutrition among children from tribal communities in India.

### What obstacles did she face?

- While applying for her MSc degree at IISc (headed by CV Raman), her application was dismissed by Raman stating that he wasn't ready to accept any girl in his institute.
- Later, Kamala challenged Raman that she would complete the course with distinction, and finally, **he allowed her in**, imposing several conditions.
- Sohonie completed her course with distinction and secured admission to Cambridge University, England, in 1936. **"This incident forced Raman to change his opinion about women** and from that year he admitted a few students every year," Sohonie narrated.

### What did she work upon at Cambridge and thereafter?

- At Cambridge, Sohonie finished her PhD in merely 14 months, and her thesis was just 40 pages. She worked on potatoes there and discovered the enzyme Cytochrome C'.
- In India she worked on several things before working on '**neera**', a drink made from palm extract at the suggestion of the First Indian President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad.
- She popularized the drink and introduced it into the diet of tribal malnourished children and pregnant women which helped improve their health significantly.

Source – The Indian Express



## Central Bureau of Investigation

**News:** Recently, the Tamil Nadu government has announced that it has withdrawn the general consent given to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), under Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946.

### What is CBI?

- The CBI was established by a resolution of the Ministry of Home Affairs and later transferred to the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, currently functioning as an **attached office**.
- Its establishment was recommended by the **Santhanam Committee** on Prevention of Corruption.
- The CBI operates under the **DSPE Act, of 1946**. It is neither a constitutional nor a statutory body.
- It investigates cases related to bribery, governmental corruption, breaches of central laws, multi-state organized crime, and multi-agency or international cases.

### What is the General Consent principle?

- The consent of the state government to CBI can be either case-specific or "general".

- General consent is **normally given by states** to help the CBI in the seamless investigation of cases of corruption against central government employees in their states. This is essentially consent by default, which means CBI may begin investigations taking consent as having been already given.
- In the absence of general consent, CBI would have to apply to the state government for its consent in every individual case, and before taking even small actions.

### What are the challenges faced by CBI in India?

- **Political interference** - The CBI has been criticized by the Supreme Court of India for being a “**caged parrot speaking in its master’s voice**”, due to excessive political interference in its functioning.
- **Lack of autonomy** - The CBI depends on the **Home Ministry for staffing**, as many of its investigators come from the Indian Police Service. It also depends on the **Law Ministry for lawyers** and the **Finance Ministry for funds**. The CBI also needs **prior permission** from the state governments to investigate cases in their jurisdiction, which may hamper its efficiency and impartiality.
- **Inadequate resources** - The CBI faces a shortage of manpower, infrastructure, and technical expertise to handle the increasing number and complexity of cases.
- The CBI also has a **low conviction rate**, due to delays in trials, lack of coordination with other agencies, and poor quality of investigation and prosecution.

### What is the need of the hour?

- Establish the CBI as an **independent investigative agency** separate from the administrative control of the Central Government.
- **Strengthen legal provisions** to safeguard the autonomy and impartiality of the CBI.
- **Investing in advanced technology and infrastructure** to equip the CBI with modern tools for digital forensics, data analysis, and crime mapping.
- Several committees have proposed **conferring statutory status** to the CBI to ensure its smooth functioning and operational autonomy.

## Facts for Prelims

### Juneteenth

**News:** Juneteenth — a combination of ‘June’ and ‘nineteenth’ — marks the day in 1865 when the last enslaved people in the United States learned they were free.

#### How did Juneteenth start?

- The celebrations began with enslaved people in Galveston, Texas. Although President Abraham Lincoln’s **Emancipation Proclamation** freed the slaves in 1863, it could not be enforced in many places in the South until the Civil War ended in 1865. Even then, some white people who had profited from their unpaid labour were reluctant to share the news.

#### What does Juneteenth mean?

- It’s a blend of the words **June and nineteenth**. The holiday has also been called Juneteenth Independence Day, Freedom Day, second Independence Day and Emancipation Day.
- The day has evolved over the years, with people and communities developing their traditions and customs.
- The US President signed legislation in 2021 to make Juneteenth a federal holiday.
- All 50 US states have proclamations in place to recognize and celebrate Juneteenth. But it is not a universal American holiday just yet.

### Gandhi Peace Prize

**News: Gita Press, Gorakhpur**, one of the world's largest publishers, has refused to accept the Rs 1 crore cash reward for the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2021 amid a controversy over being picked for the honour.

### What is the Gandhi Peace Prize award?

- The Gandhi Peace Prize is an **annual award** instituted in 1995, on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi as a tribute to the ideals espoused by Mahatma Gandhi.
- The award is open to **all persons** regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or gender.
- The award carries an amount of Rs 1 crore, a citation, a plaque and a traditional handicraft or handloom item. The award is conferred by the President of India at a function in Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- Recent awardees include Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al Said, Oman (2019) and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (2020), Bangladesh.

### About Gita Press:

- Established in 1923 by **Jaya Dayal Goyandka** and **Hanuman Prasad Poddar**, Gita Press is one of the world's largest publishers of Hindu religious texts, having published 41.7 crore books in 14 languages, including 16.21 crore copies of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita.
- Gita Press also runs a monthly magazine called **Kalyan**, which covers topics such as spirituality, culture, history, ethics and morality.

## Places in News

### Belarus

**News:** The country is in the news recently for having received tactical nuclear weapons from Russia.

#### About:

- Belarus is a **landlocked country** in Eastern Europe.
- It is bordered by Russia to the east and northeast, Ukraine to the south, Poland to the west, and Lithuania and Latvia to the northwest. Belarus is an authoritarian state.
- **Capital** – Minsk
- **Other important cities** – Brest, Grodno, Gomel
- **Major rivers** – Dnieper, Daugava, Neman, Bug

